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sense of mankind from this pivot, however selfishly and dishonestly the rich have always dodged around it. Adam Smith said: "The subjects of every State ought to contribute toward the support of the government as nearly as possible in proportion to their respective abilities." Then he almost spoiled that bit of unalloyed wisdom by adding: "that is, in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the State." Here is the income tax; but if he had left off his addendum, his principle would have been understood to demand a direct tax on assets in proportion to holdings.

There is no other tax really worth consideration. A tax on incomes always includes a fine imposed upon persons who handle property to the best advantage. In seasons of close competition, or in "hard times," it puts a premium on the stoppage of industry, and leads to "slow, sure investments," thus injuring the whole community in all directions. But a tax on assets pushes them into active use, that their value may not diminish, in spite of the deduction for the public.

Scientific taxation will consist of ascertaining a people's exact right and share in the wealth of any country, collecting it rigidly, paying all legitimate public expenses out of it, and then redistributing the surplus for the production of new wealth, through the employment of idle labor.

But one point will have to be emphasized with unmistakable force. The man who dodges his lawful tax should be punished, if necessary, to the extent of confiscating his whole property, and confining him in the State prison. There is no offense against property that ought to be met with more severe penalties.

EDWARD GORDON CLARK.

III.

SHOULD WOMEN BE HANGED?

THIS purely sentimental question has recently come before the public with a good deal of prominence, by reason of various homicides by women and the death-sentences following the crimes. Wendell Phillips used to insist that, as women in the United States could be sent to jail and choked on the gallows, they should have a voice in making the laws by which they are imprisoned and hanged. Execution without representation is not exactly in accordance with modern democracy and its general course of legislation. This objection against the hanging of women may not be considered weighty enough to save their necks, particularly as the majority of women give conclusive evidence, so far, that they prefer indirect representation, through their masculine subordinates, to a direct vote themselves, at the saloons and barber-shops where the right of suffrage is commonly exercised. Still, the objection of the women's-rights people appears to be the only one resting on sense, not sentiment. If the distinction of sex is to save women from legal responsibility for their acts, men will then be apt to commit their most deliberate crimes by representation, and, as society is now organized, will readily find enough female agents for their purposes. No; there must be the same general laws for men and women, or there may as well be no laws at all.

So the question of hanging women is really the question of hanging anybody, either man or woman. Is capital punishment a right thing at all? And, if it is right, is there any need of using so coarse, ostentatious, and sickening a tool as the gallows to send any human being out of a material condition, always precarious, at best, and easily ended in hundreds of quiet, decorous ways? The present Governor of New York has certainly done an excellent thing in asking the *savants* and the legislators whether it is wise to continue the erection of gibbets in the Empire State.

I, for one, do not doubt the perfect right of society to protect the whole body politic against its individual members, in any necessary way. Doubtless, too, the fear of death does often restrain people from committing capital offenses. Suppose that imprisonment for life at hard labor should be substituted for the death penalty, and then criminals should attempt to kill their fellow-prisoners or legal guardians. It would seem that the line saving such malefactors from death, at the risk of other lives, ought to be drawn somewhere. Life is not so utterly "sacred" that good lives must be sacrificed to bad ones.

The common sense of mankind has so far decided that the death penalty should be modified to the progress of civilization, rather than abolished altogether; and this decision may be found correct in ultimate principle, as well as temporary policy. But one point of the discussion is clear: No calm and decent community in the world now demands that revenge and torture be mixed with legal inflictions, though the feeling that disgrace should attend execution, as an additional preventive to crime, may have something to do with the retention, by the various civilized nations, of their legal implements of death.

America has inherited the gallows. It is a British incentive to virtue, though Austria still preserves it, in common with England, Ireland, and Scotland. France, always demanding briskness and good taste, but always bloody enough, uses the guillotine. This powerful knife, rigged on the principle of a spile-driver, simply reduces to the certainty and expedition of mechanics the old practice of beheading, still followed in most European states. The soldier, being a man of war and of honor, is usually shot for grave dereliction or disobedience, as he is apt to be, also, for doing his whole duty. But the soldier, too, sometimes goes to the gallows, when special disgrace is intended for him.

In the days of Blackstone—only a little more than a century ago—there were a hundred and sixty capital offenses in England. Treason and murder now constitute the list. In the United States seven other crimes may, in certain instances, be expiated by the death-penalty. These are piracy, arson, rape, the rescue of a prisoner on the way to execution, and the burning or destroying of vessels.

The modern study of physical and mental phenomena has led to the conclusion that criminals are merely the victims of birth or circumstance; and even bad blood is usually overcome by favorable surroundings. But the fact of criminality, however it may arise, necessitates restraint or extinguishment. And that is all. It does not necessitate unseemly terrors or tortures.

Let all considerate, humane, and even artistic people encourage the abolition of the gallows. It is a hideous and clumsy structure, when a little morphine or chloroform, a few drops of laudanum, or even the fumes from a quart of charcoal will perform the easy task of banishing a poor human soul from its frail tenement of clay.

HELEN MAR WILKS.